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Ongoing priorities and themes

Information received from Governments

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Canada

Summary

In the present document, the Government of Canada provides updated information on its policy development for indigenous peoples. It also outlines a number of initiatives and programmes covering a great range of activities in the areas concerning indigenous peoples which are being undertaken by or with indigenous peoples at national and local levels. The Government of Canada, in the present document, reaffirms its commitment to continuing its efforts to address issues of concern to indigenous peoples, including indigenous women, in the fields of education, the environment, health and social development.

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I. Introduction

1. On 19 April 2004, the Prime Minister of Canada, Paul Martin, met with aboriginal representatives from across the country at the first Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Round table ever held. The objective of this unprecedented gathering of ministers, parliamentarians and aboriginal leaders was to engage in a renewed dialogue that would contribute to transformative change and improve the lives of aboriginal people in Canada, while strengthening relationships in order to build a strong and sustainable partnership with aboriginal communities. Discussions at the Round table covered many of the same concerns raised by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, including economic development, education and health.

2. The Canadian Constitution dictates that the federal, provincial and territorial governments share powers and responsibilities. Although aboriginal issues officially come under the jurisdiction of the federal Government, provincial and territorial governments also offer programmes and services to aboriginal Canadians in certain areas where they share powers. These areas include health, post-secondary education, workforce training and environmental protection. Each province or territory may offer programmes and adapt initiatives for aboriginal residents living on or off reserves. Thus, we find programmes and services in each jurisdiction aimed at aboriginal individuals, groups and businesses. Some of these are reserved specifically for aboriginal Canadians. Others target a larger clientele, while incorporating aboriginal components. Such programmes are generally linked to education, health, employment and culture.

3. Municipalities can also establish partnerships with their aboriginal residents aimed at improving the lives of aboriginal Canadians. Examples may take the form of agreements to provide services, aboriginal representation on councils or joint meetings.

4. It would be impossible to adequately express the quantity, quality or scope of the multitude of services offered by the provinces, territories and municipalities. This document should not, therefore, be seen as a complete listing of Canada's broad and diverse efforts to improve the situation and lives of aboriginal Canadians, but one which focuses instead on aspects of federal Government programmes and policies.

5. While recognizing that many challenges remain, we present in this report our responses to those recommendations that seem the most pertinent to the Canadian situation.

II. Indigenous women

Canadian response to the recommendation in paragraph 14[1]

6. The Canadian Government's main departments dealing with indigenous women's issues are Status of Women Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Status of Women Canada has four bodies currently working on or planning actions or activities that directly correspond to the recommendations of the third session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which often work in cooperation with, and in support of, other Canadian Government

departments, including Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, to advance the interests of aboriginal women.

7. **The Research Directorate**: the Policy Research Fund supports gender-based policy research on public policy issues of concern to women in Canada. Specifically of concern to Canada's indigenous women, the Policy Research Fund has published two policy research reports and has funded an additional three, which are still in progress:

"From the Fur Trade to Free Trade: Forestry and First Nations Women in Canada", Connie Deiter and Darlene Rude, was published April 2004;

"A Holistic Framework for Aboriginal Policy Research", Carolyn Kenny, with Emily Faries, Jo-Anne Fiske and Cora Voyageur, published January 2005;

"Seeking Alternatives to Bill C-31: An investigation of matrilineal models of First Nations citizenship and community membership policies", by Jo-Anne Fiske and Evelyn George (in progress);

"Bill C-31 Membership and Status: Unrecognized and Unstated Paternity", Michelle Mann (in progress);

"National Security and Aboriginal Women", by Connie Deiter and Darlene Rude (in progress).

8. The Research Directorate will also be actively involved in the planning of an Aboriginal Policy Research Conference led by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. This conference, which will take place in November 2005, will bring together aboriginal researchers, policy makers and non-governmental organizations to facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote information-sharing on social, economic and demographic issues related to the well-being of aboriginal people. The Research Directorate will be leading several workshops focusing on issues of concern to aboriginal women and promoting gender-based research.

9. **Women's Programme**: in 2003 Status of Women Canada made a commitment to use its annual Family Violence Initiative allocation ($1 million Canadian dollars over four years, from 2003-2004 to 2006-2007), to fund national initiatives of aboriginal women's organizations on the issue of violence against aboriginal women. In addition, women's programme funds continue to be made available to carry out initiatives at local, regional and national levels to address violence against aboriginal women and other issues of concern to them, including matrimonial real property rights, capacity-building for aboriginal women's organizations, Inuit women's participation in Arctic fisheries, involving aboriginal women in decision-making, governance issues and obstacles to the participation of aboriginal women in business.

10. **Gender-Based Analysis Unit**: training materials from the Gender-Based Analysis Unit have been used by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada as a base upon which to develop their own training, and were later adapted specifically for policy and programme officers working on aboriginal issues.

11. **Policy and External Relations Unit**: the Policy and External Relations Unit works in collaboration with other departments to advance issues of concern to aboriginal women. It provides input and makes recommendations to government departments and agencies on various Cabinet documents relating to aboriginal

people, and to women specifically. It also coordinates current work being undertaken between federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for the status of women, who have focused priority attention on preventing violence against aboriginal women. To improve the situation of aboriginal women, the ministers agreed to take joint and/or individual government action on: access to programmes and services, public education and awareness, capacity-building and policy enhancement according to their respective priorities and needs. At the next meeting of federal-provincial/territorial ministers, which is to be held in Saskatchewan in 2005, the ministers will provide an update on their progress.

12. The Government of Canada is committed to addressing disadvantages faced by aboriginal women and is also working closely with government colleagues on a response to the proposal of the Native Women's Association of Canada Sisters in Spirit Campaign that seeks to address issues relating to violence against aboriginal women, particularly racialized, sexualized violence. The Government and Status of Women Canada will continue to work with aboriginal people to address other issues, including legal rights, poverty and homelessness.

13. In addition, a federal/provincial/territorial/aboriginal forum addressing issues of concern to aboriginal peoples includes the participation of aboriginal women's organizations. A recent series of round tables held by the Prime Minister on issues such as housing, education and governance all included a gender perspective. Aboriginal women are also involved in the development of a report card on progress for aboriginal peoples.

III. Education

Canadian response to the recommendation in paragraph 19[1]

14. Canada's provinces and territories hold individual jurisdiction over matters and legislation related to education within their boundaries, including all aboriginal people living off reserve, while Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is responsible for the education of First Nations peoples living on reserve. The Department of Canadian Heritage is the lead government department dealing with the preservation, revitalization and promotion of aboriginal languages.

15. In support of the goals of participation, access and attainment set by the Permanent Forum, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has been working with First Nations nationally and regionally on a comprehensive review of all of its education policies and programmes, and is currently moving to support the First Nation philosophy of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning represents a paradigm shift that supports new approaches to addressing all the needs of First Nation learners through the course of their educational experience and the key determinants that impact educational outcomes such as healthy childhood development, adequate housing, parental involvement in education, youth development and, ultimately, the transition from education to the labour force. In November 2004, the Government of Canada held two sessions with federal, provincial and territorial officials, aboriginal organizations and educators and other experts focusing on a range of issues with relation to the aboriginal lifelong learning continuum.

16. In support of these efforts to ultimately improve educational attainment, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada:

(a) Provides funding for high-quality, culturally relevant education, comparable to that provided in provincial schools, for 119,000 First Nations children, from grades K-12;

(b) Provides financial support for post-secondary education for Aboriginal Learners, a programme that has seen an explosion in the number of aboriginal students holding post-secondary degrees, with growth from about 200 in the late 1970s to over 30,000 graduates today;

(c) Supports the development and delivery of culturally relevant post secondary courses for First Nations and Inuit students;

(d) Supports First Nation and Inuit cultural education centres in developing a culturally relevant curriculum for First Nation schools;

(e) Provides access to work experience, cooperative education and career information through the First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy.

17. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has also launched the special education programme to ensure students on reserve have access to special education programmes and services at a standard comparable to that of other Canadians and has directed new investments in First Nations education in order to increase the ability of band-operated schools to recruit and retain qualified teachers by helping to narrow the gap between the salaries of teachers on reserve and provincial teachers and to affirm, through practical measures, the importance of parental and community involvement in education.

18. In regard to community development and appreciation of aboriginal cultures and languages, First Nation communities are making decisions themselves about how best to use education to support community development and cultural continuity. Close to 500 schools are now under the administrative control of First Nations, which allows them to have an important influence on the education and curricula provided to their children and youth.

19. To foster culture and language instruction in First Nation schools, Indian and Northern Affairs has:

(a) Supported teacher training programmes since the early 1980s through its post-secondary education programme. In 2003, just over half of teachers in reserve schools were aboriginal; supported through its cultural education centres programme, the creation and development of local and regional cultural education centres to support culturally appropriate education for First Nation and Inuit students;

(b) Supported the establishment of aboriginal immersion schools, such as the Kahnawake survival school;

(c) Supported private and public partnerships for the design of curricula, as well as activities related to career development such as career fairs and science camps.

20. In terms of institutional development, the emergence of First Nation educational organizations is significant, demonstrating that education systems are vital for building the foundation for valuable education opportunities for all aboriginal children. Some First Nation and Inuit communities now have total jurisdiction over their K-12 systems: the Crees and Inuit in Quebec, the Sechelt, the

Nisga'a and the Westbank First Nation in British Columbia and the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia to name a few. Two years ago, First Nations in British Columbia, the Government of Canada and the province of British Columbia signed a memorandum of understanding to undertake negotiations towards jurisdiction. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has also supported the creation of the First Nations University of Canada and many more indigenous higher learning institutes affiliated with Canadian colleges and universities.

21. In regard to the maintenance and continued use of indigenous languages, the Department of Canadian Heritage provides funding to aboriginal organizations that administer programmes and projects that preserve, revitalize and promote aboriginal languages in Canada.

22. Since 1998, the Aboriginal Languages Initiative has provided annual funding of $5 million Canadian dollars for community projects that have the goal of increasing the number of aboriginal language speakers as well as the intergenerational transmission of these languages.

23. In 2002, the Government of Canada announced a new commitment of $172.5 million for the preservation, revitalization and promotion of aboriginal languages and cultures. The majority of this funding ($160 million) will be used to establish and operate a national aboriginal languages and cultures centre, which is to be launched in 2006. This new entity is expected to fund community projects and programmes, as well as develop new initiatives that may include establishing a clearinghouse for learning materials and best practices, commissioning relevant research and developing means of sharing success stories nationally and internationally. A task force on aboriginal languages and cultures is currently drafting recommendations on the mandate and operations of this new entity.

IV. Culture and other areas relating to indigenous peoples

Canadian response to the recommendation in paragraph 28

24. The Aboriginal Affairs Branch of the Department of Canadian Heritage administers funding programmes and develops policies with the goal of assisting in the development of strong aboriginal organizations, communities, cultures and languages based on true partnership, mutual understanding and inclusion. The Department's Aboriginal Representative Organizations Programme funds aboriginal organizations in order to maintain a consultative framework of Inuit, Métis and non-status Indian representative organizations through which Governments can address the social, economic, political and cultural issues affecting the lives of Canada's aboriginal citizens. The organizations that receive funding through the programme develop policies and administer projects that preserve and protect their aboriginal cultural heritage.

25. In 1993, one of the portfolio agencies of the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation, established the Aboriginal Training Programme in Museum Practices, with the aim of providing aboriginal participants with professional and technical training in museum practices. Participants in the programme are aboriginal Canadians either enrolled in university programmes, or with experience in community museums or cultural centres. This

initiative assists in building closer ties between one of Canada's national museums and aboriginal cultural organizations and communities.

26. In addition, by working with aboriginal people to establish the language and cultures centre described above, the Government is acknowledging that aboriginal peoples have stewardship over their languages and cultures, as well as its commitment in assisting them in preserving, revitalizing and protecting this valuable aspect of Canada's cultural diversity.

Canadian response to the recommendation in paragraph 29[1]

27. Sport Canada supports the North American Indigenous Games, the Arctic Winter Games and other similar events that provide competitive opportunities for aboriginal athletes in an environment reflecting aboriginal cultures, values and lifestyles. Sport Canada initiatives and programmes offer aboriginal peoples an opportunity to share their cultural values with the broader Canadian public and internationally.

Canadian response to the recommendation in paragraph 31[1]

28. Canada works closely with aboriginal peoples on both policy and programme levels to improve their quality of life and secure a brighter future. An example of this leadership is the long-term goal of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to establish an economic empowerment strategy for aboriginal women, with emphasis on their entrepreneurial development.

29. Two important initiatives developed specifically for women are as follows:

(a) **"Journey to success"**: with the support of other jurisdictions across the country, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has developed an aboriginal women's business planning guide, entitled "Journey to success", which provides positive and constructive information to aboriginal women who are interested in starting their own business. This tool has proven to be extremely popular and has been translated and printed in five languages, including Inuktitut, French, English, Spanish and Russian. The guide has also generated considerable interest internationally, and was tabled at both the United Nations Permanent Forum in May 2004 as well as at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum in Chile in September 2004;

(b) **Women for tomorrow**: through the Aboriginal Services component of the Canadian Executive Service Organization, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada funded a five-module workshop, entitled "Women for tomorrow", which is intended to provide aboriginal women with the opportunity to acquire overall business knowledge, management/ownership skills, specific business operational and financial knowledge, human resources management planning and business readiness skills. The first pilot project was launched in Saskatchewan in 2004. Since then, 10 communities across the province have benefited from the series of leadership workshops. Additional workshops will be offered to Aboriginal communities in Ontario commencing in January 2005 and to Inuit communities in Nunavut in June 2005.

30. In addition, the Government of Canada has undertaken the following initiatives:

(a) Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is coordinating its efforts to expand aboriginal participation on trade matters by working with the Aboriginal International Business Development (AIBD) Committee, a consortium whose membership includes 23 federal departments and agencies coordinating on trade development activities targeting aboriginal businesses.

(b) The CD-ROM "Open for business success stories" advocates greater awareness of the business capacity of aboriginal peoples and their needs. The CD-ROM is also available in Spanish and is being distributed to Canada's trade network, including embassies, Canada Business Service Centres, aboriginal communities and others.

(c) The Virtual Aboriginal Trade Show is an online directory of aboriginal businesses connecting them to domestic and international markets. It is available in seven languages.

Canadian response to the recommendations in paragraphs 33 (a) and (b)[1]

31. In order to assist aboriginal women in finding their voice within their communities, the Department of Canadian Heritage funds the Aboriginal Women's Programme, which enables aboriginal women to influence policies, programmes, legislation and decision-making affecting their social, cultural, economic and political well-being within their own communities and in Canadian society as a whole while maintaining their cultural distinctiveness and preserving cultural identity.

32. The programme has two components:

(a) The Family Violence Initiative, which is organized on an annual basis to enable aboriginal women to address violence-related issues in a culturally appropriate manner within the nuclear as well as the extended family of their aboriginal communities;

(b) The self-government initiative, which enables aboriginal women to participate fully and equitably in the consultations and decision-making process related to self-government issues.

33. In 1971, Canada was the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy. By so doing, Canada affirmed the value and dignity of all Canadian citizens regardless of their racial or ethnic origins, their language or their religious affiliation. This policy of multiculturalism was entrenched in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, adopted in 1988.

34. In cooperation with national aboriginal organizations, the Government of Canada designated 21 June as National Aboriginal Day. This date was chosen because it corresponds to the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, because for generations many aboriginal groups have celebrated their culture and heritage at this time of year. National Aboriginal Day is an opportunity for all Canadians to become better acquainted with the cultural diversity of Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples, to discover the unique accomplishments of aboriginal peoples in fields as varied as agriculture, the environment and the arts and to celebrate their significant contribution to Canadian society.

35. The Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Round table, hosted by Prime Minister Paul Martin, in April 2004 and its follow-up sessions have demonstrated the commitment

of the Government of Canada to renewing its relationship with aboriginal Canadians. The importance of Aboriginal languages and cultures was underlined at the round table and in the follow-up sessions. This process will assist the Government in developing policies that will assist in strengthening aboriginal cultures.

V. Human rights

Canadian response to the recommendation in paragraph 42[1]

36. Canada is a party to the six core United Nations human rights instruments (the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of the Child), which are implemented through a variety of measures including legislation, policies and programmes. The human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons in Canada are guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In addition, the Constitution Act of 1982 recognizes and affirms the existing treaty and aboriginal rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada. These rights are guaranteed equally to men and women.

37. Canada includes reference to indigenous peoples, in particular to indigenous women, in its report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

38. Mechanisms exist in Canada to ensure access to legal processes for all Canadians, including indigenous women. Canada also has legal aid programmes which indigenous women, like other Canadians, can access if they meet its specific criteria. In addition, Canada has a Court Challenges Programme, which allows individuals and groups to seek funding for court challenges to federal legislation under the equality guarantee of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

39. Employment equity programmes in Canada apply to aboriginal women and to aboriginal peoples in general. In regard to the federal public service, the Public Service Commission is responsible under the Employment Equity Act for identifying and removing barriers in its own systems, policies and practices in recruitment and staffing, within its role and mandate under the Public Service Employment Act. The Employment Equity Act also requires the Public Service Commission to institute "positive measures" that go beyond removing barriers to actively promote a more representative public service in order to hasten progress in closing gaps in representation.

VI. Economic and social development

Canadian response to the recommendations in paragraphs 57 to 59[1]

40. Since April 1999, the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy has been helping aboriginal communities to strengthen their ability to compete in the Canadian job market.

41. As part of the Government of Canada's response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Strategy was given a five-year, $1.6 billion budget to help aboriginal communities and organizations take on the responsibility of developing and implementing their own employment and human resources programmes. The Strategy has been extended for one year until 31 March 2005.

42. Delivered through 79 Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement holders, the Strategy has been designed with flexibility in order to meet the needs of aboriginal communities while keeping in mind their wide-ranging cultural diversity.

43. Since the Strategy is aimed at helping aboriginal Canadians to increase their self-sufficiency, build stronger communities, and develop long-term employment, the largest share of total funding goes towards the creation of employment programmes and services. In meeting the labour market needs of aboriginal people throughout Canada, the direct involvement of aboriginal organizations and the emerging network of partnerships are among the Strategy's strongest hallmarks.

44. Aboriginal organizations design programmes adapted to their communities and needs, and are responsible for implementing these programmes under the Strategy, including skills development and employment programmes that support aboriginal people in preparing for, obtaining and maintaining employment, including self-employment.

45. The Strategy is managed by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, which works in partnership with the five national aboriginal organizations: the Assembly of First Nations; the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; the Métis National Council; the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples; and the Native Women's Association of Canada.

46. Funding is provided to the 79 holders under six components: labour market; urban programmes; capacity-building; childcare; youth; and the disabled. In terms of size and location, agreements vary from large geographical areas with pockets of aboriginal population to highly populated urban settings. All are community-based entities mandated to deliver labour market programming and services to address the labour market needs and develop the skills that lead to job recruitment and retention. To assist their aboriginal clients prepare for and obtain sustainable employment, holders use an individual case-management approach whereby a client may receive one or more interventions. These may consist of needs assessment, employment counselling, skills development, work experience or self-employment assistance. Client follow-up interviews are part of the case management to gauge if the actions taken were sufficient and to determine whether additional interventions might be needed.

47. Specifically in regard to paragraph 57 of the report of the Permanent Forum,[1] aboriginal women in Canada are guaranteed access to programmes provided by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. This access is also referenced explicitly in the agreements, which allow for design and delivery of skills development and employment programmes by aboriginal organizations for aboriginal people, regardless of gender. Women have assumed access to all agreements.

48. Providing efficient and effective labour market programming requires the capacity to plan, deliver and report on the programmes and services that meet the

needs of the aboriginal clients, employers and communities. Ongoing reporting and assessment give the agreement holders the information they need to ensure that their labour market programming remains current and relevant. Enabling the capacity of agreement holders to manage and administer all aspects of agreements is a key feature of the overall strategy.

VII. Environment

Canadian response to the recommendation in paragraph 71[1]

49. Canada supports the aims of the Convention on Biological Diversity and was a strong advocate for the increased participation of indigenous peoples in the international talks at the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing. Canada would like to encourage the further participation of indigenous peoples in the Working Group, and is funding aboriginal representatives to participate at its third meeting.

Canadian response to the recommendations in paragraphs 81 and 82[1]

50. The Government of Canada has been proactive in addressing priority water needs in First Nation communities. In collaboration with Environment Canada and Health Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is implementing a seven-part First Nation Water Management Strategy, aimed at improving the provision and the safety of water in First Nation communities. The strategy addresses the urgent need for better water quality on reserves. New funding in the amount of $600 million has been targeted to that end. The strategy also provides for the coherent and structured management of water quality on reserves with a multi-barrier (source-to-tap) approach. The strategy addresses not only the building and upgrading of water and wastewater facilities but also includes effective water quality monitoring combined and sustainable operation and maintenance programmes.

VIII. Health

Canadian response to the recommendation in paragraph 89[1]

51. As expressed at the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Round table, health is one of the key areas where the Government of Canada is committed to working in partnership with aboriginal peoples to make tangible progress on improving the health and well-being of aboriginal peoples and communities.

52. At the special meeting of first ministers and aboriginal leaders, on 13 September 2004, federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for health and aboriginal affairs were tasked to work in partnership with aboriginal leaders to develop a blueprint on aboriginal health and to report back within one year. The objective of the aboriginal health blueprint is to improve the health status of aboriginal peoples and health services in Canada through concrete initiatives for:

(a) Improved delivery of and access to health services to meet the needs of all aboriginal peoples through better integration and adaptation of all health systems;

(b) Measures that will ensure that aboriginal peoples benefit fully from improvements to Canadian health systems;

(c) A forward-looking agenda of prevention, health promotion and other upstream investments for aboriginal peoples.

53. The Government of Canada also announced the following initiatives at the special meeting:

(a) An Aboriginal Health Transition Fund to enable Governments and aboriginal communities to devise new ways to integrate and adapt existing health services to better meet the needs of all aboriginal peoples ($200 million);

(b) An Aboriginal Health and Human Resources Initiative to increase the number of aboriginal people choosing health-care professions; adapt current health professional curricula to provide a more culturally sensitive focus; and to improve the retention of health workers serving all aboriginal peoples ($100 million);

(c) Programmes of health promotion and disease prevention, focusing on suicide prevention, diabetes, maternal and child health and early childhood development ($400 million);

(d) Through Health Canada, the Government is committed to working with its aboriginal partner organizations, including women's organizations, on all of these initiatives.

54. In addition to the upstream investments in health promotion and disease prevention, Health Canada is also involved in the Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy, endorsed by federal, provincial and territorial ministers of health, and is currently engaging national aboriginal organizations in a dialogue to promote healthy eating and physical activity.

55. In addition, Health Canada provides funds annually to the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network for the development and implementation of a national aboriginal AIDS awareness campaign for World AIDS Day. The materials for these campaigns are printed in English, French and Inuktituk. Health Canada also funds, on a project-by-project basis, the activities of the national Inuit women's association in prevention education. All materials of the association are printed in Inuktituk.

56. In Canada, provincial governments have the responsibility for HIV testing. Provincial health providers therefore carry out the majority of testing for aboriginal people. The HIV/AIDS programme run by Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch is currently planning to further develop its care, treatment and support component. Health Canada employs a number of specially trained aboriginal HIV/AIDS health-care workers to deliver health-care services on reserve, although it is facing a challenge owing to the overall low number of nursing graduates.

57. The Office of Nursing Services, in collaboration with the Aboriginal Nurses Association, the National Aboriginal Nurses Association and educational and employer partners across Canada, is working on an aboriginal nursing strategy to recruit, support and encourage individuals of aboriginal ancestry to consider health careers, particularly nursing. At a December 2004 workshop, participants developed a comprehensive plan to support this endeavour, which would highlight nursing and the aboriginal people working in this area.

58. Health Canada supports capacity-building for aboriginal organizations, including the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, and the National Indian and Inuit Community Health Representatives (comprised mostly of aboriginal women), which is currently working on standards and accreditation for its membership.

59. Through its Pan-Canadian Health Human Resources Strategy, Health Canada is working with aboriginal organizations to address midwifery issues and to ensure that midwifery is incorporated into the new Aboriginal Health and Human Resources Initiative.

60. The Primary Health Care Transition Fund, announced in September 2000, recently funded the Aboriginal Midwifery Education Programme, a partnership between the University of Manitoba, the Government of Manitoba and the College of Midwives. It is the first aboriginal midwifery curriculum in Canada.

61. In addition to the Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Strategy announced in October 2002, which provides $320 million over five years to First Nation and other aboriginal children, a comprehensive maternal child health strategy is being developed by the Government of Canada in collaboration with provincial and aboriginal partners. Components of this strategy include:

(a) A model of coordinated maternal child health initiatives providing a "single window" to a continuum of services;

(b) Increased emphasis and professional expertise focusing on prevention and promotion;

(c) Additional educational supports for nurses to provide in-depth prenatal and emergency birthing support;

(d) Integration of "cultural competence" as part of the orientation for all nurses in order to facilitate culturally sensitive care and support;

(e) Information on components of aboriginal care in all nursing curricula for all nurses.

62. The Government of Canada is committed to working with all the parties involved in aboriginal health, federal and provincial governments, regional health authorities, aboriginal partner organizations and communities, to close the gap in health status between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians.

Notes

[1] All recommendations are contained in chapter I, section B, of the report of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its third session, *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 23* (E/2004/43).